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## OPEN LETTERS.

## The Manchester group of botanists.

A PHOTOGRAPH of twenty-five botanists was shown at the Indianapolis meeting of the A. A. A. S. and a number of persons expressed a desire to obtain copies of it. As an accommodation to those who may wish a copy, I will send an order to the photographer for as many as are wanted, and distribute them upon their arrival.

The group was taken at Manchester, England, in 1886, and was the company who gathered at the hospitable home of Prof. Williamson to do honor to the visit of Dr. Asa Gray. All departments of botanical science were represented. The group embraces: Messrs. McNab, Jessen, Treub, Solms-Laubach, Weissmann, Saporta, Baker, Lankester, D'Arcy Thompson, Dyer, Cohn, De Bary, Williamson, Asa Gray, Pringsheim, Carruthers, Gardiner, Oliver, Vines, Marshall Ward, C. Bailey, Balfour, Bower, Potter and Vaizey. The picture is 10 by 12 inches, and an excellent portrait of each individual. The price will be \$1.35 unmounted or \$1.75 mounted on a neat card 14 by 16 inches and the names written underneath. Those wishing copies will please send in their names as early as possible.—J. C. ARTHUR, *La Fayette, Ind.*

## Monomialism.

I like the tone of the editorial in the May GAZETTE upon nomenclature. The propagators of this new fashion of naming plants are so confident of success and have so often predicted that the whole botanical world must make unconditional surrender, that I hasten to express my own feeling in the matter before my guns are spiked and my arms confiscated.

I suppose that the object of a name is to afford some ready and tolerably permanent means of designating a particular plant. And we have always been taught that it is no part of any system of nomenclature to give credit to any person. An author's name is attached to any plant for the simple purpose of identifying the plant name and we are also taught that the oldest name of any plant must stand. In order to meet these various requirements, botanists have been in the habit—erroneously, it now turns out—of employing two words to designate the plant, and this has been known as the binomial system of nomenclature. But now they are telling us that these two words do not constitute *the name* of the plant, but that *the name, per se*, is the second word of the two. In other words, *saccharinum* is the name of the sugar maple, *Canadensis* is the name of a Cornus—although one of my botanics declares that it is the name of a rush and even of a spruce!—and that *repens* is the name of white clover. This is the monomial system of nomenclature, and its devotees are delving through every author in the hope of finding *the name* of the plant. When this name is found—or supposed to be found, which amounts to the same thing—it is attached to some generic name to which it was never designed to fit, and the twain, to which an algebraic formula has been attached, is given to the world as the monomio-binomial name of the plant.

Now there is only one reason why I object to all this, and that is that it serves no purpose. It adds nothing to the stability of the name